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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/774,417	02/10/2004	Yoshiki Nishibayashi	50212-559	1031
7590	01/05/2005		EXAMINER	
McDermott, Will & Emery 600 13th Street, N.W. Washington, DC 20005-3096			OLSEN, ALLAN W	
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			1763	

DATE MAILED: 01/05/2005

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)	
	10/774,417	NISHIBAYASHI ET AL.	
	Examiner	Art Unit	
	Allan Olsen	1763	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 10 February 2004.
2a) This action is **FINAL**. 2b) This action is non-final.
3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

4) Claim(s) 1-4 and 8-10 is/are pending in the application.
4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.

5) Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.

6) Claim(s) 1-4 and 8-10 is/are rejected.

7) Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.

8) Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.

10) The drawing(s) filed on 04 August 2004 is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.

Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).

Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).

11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
a) All b) Some * c) None of:
1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. 09/995,854.
3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

1) Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
2) Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
3) Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date 2/10/2004.

4) Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. ____ .

5) Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
6) Other: ____ .

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

Claims 1, 3, 4, 8 and 10 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by JP10-312735 (hereinafter, Saito).

To facilitate this application process, reference will be made to US 6,184,611 which is an English language equivalent of Saito.

Saito teaches a method which includes using a mixture of CF_4 and O_2 as the etchant for the reactive ion etching (RIE) of a masked diamond substrate. Saito teaches an O_2 : CF_4 ratio of 99.5: 0.5. This corresponds to F atom concentration of about 1% with respect to the total number of atoms in the gas mixture (see column 6, line 15 – column 7, line 10). Claim 8 recites a limitation that requires the ratio of atomic oxygen to molecular oxygen to be higher than it would otherwise be in a pure oxygen plasma. The examiner notes it is a well-established principal that the ratio of atomic oxygen to molecular oxygen ($\text{O}:\text{O}_2$) increases when fluorine is added to an oxygen plasma (See, for example, IBM Technical Disclosure Bulletin NN8712128). Claim 10 recites limitation pertaining to atomic and molecular oxygen emission spectroscopy data. The recited limitations are inherent features of atomic and molecular oxygen emission spectra.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claim 2 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Saito.

The teachings of Saito as noted above are herein relied upon.

Saito does not teach using a parallel plate plasma reactor with a power of at least 0.45 W/cm² between the parallel plate electrodes.

It would have been obvious to use a parallel plate electrode apparatus because Saito teaches an RIE process which is a process generally associated with a parallel plate apparatus. With respect to the use of 0.45 W/cm², the examiner notes that plasma power is recognized as a cause effective variable and the selection of such parameters is considered to be obvious:

"Normally, it is to be expected that a change in temperature, or in concentration, or in both, would be an unpatentable modification. Under some circumstances, however, changes such as these may impart patentability to a process if the particular ranges claimed produce a new and unexpected result which is different in kind and not merely degree from the results of the prior art... such ranges are termed "critical ranges and the applicant has the burden of proving such criticality... More particularly, where the general conditions of a claim are disclosed in the prior art, it is not inventive to discover the optimum or workable ranges by routine experimentation."

Claim 9 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Saito in view of IBM Technical Disclosure Bulletin NN8712128 (hereinafter, IBM).

The teachings of Saito as noted above are herein relied upon.

Saito does not teach adding N₂ to the O₂/CF₄ plasma.

IBM teaches adding N₂ to an O₂/CF₄ plasma.

It would have been obvious to one skilled in the art to add N₂ to the O₂/CF₄ plasma of Saito because Saito is etching a carbon material through a photoresist mask and IBM teaches that etching selectivity is increased for a carbon material relative to a photoresist, when N₂ is added to an O₂/CF₄ plasma.

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Allan Olsen whose telephone number is 571-272-1441. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F 1-5.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Greg Mills can be reached on 571-272-1439. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).



Allan Olsen
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 1763